

**"It Will Light Your Home."**

A well-known minister of God had been preaching one wild winter night, in a desolate and (to him) unknown part of the country, and was preparing to make the best of his way home in the dark, when one of his hearers approached, and gently insisted on his accepting the loan of a lantern—a very old lantern—one that the minister thought could not possibly brave the storm of that terrible evening.

But whilst he was looking dubiously, first at it, and then at the man, its owner said—

"I know, sir, the lamp is old; but it will light you home."  
"But," objected the minister (feeling sure that the light would be extinguished by the wind)—"but"—

To which the man replied, "Please, sir, don't ye trouble about the 'buts,' it will light you home;" repeated even more emphatically than before.

The minister, therefore, could do nothing but accept the offer; and in proving the poor despised lamp for himself, found it worthy of the trust its owner had reposed in it. In relating the anecdote to a congregation in North Wales, last year, he spiritualized the man's assertion, applying to it the words—

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;" which suggested the following lines:—

The lamp is oil; but not too old for service;

It never, never fails to light men through;

Though winds may rage in angry fury round it.

And do the worst their jealous spite can do,

Yet still it shines—no flickering nor failing,

Nay, seems the brighter, when the storms without,—

Those bitter storms, so full of hollow mutterings  
And dark with clouds of agony and doubt.

"Twill light you home! O traveller, won't you take it?"

Despise it not; you little know its worth:

Without it, you will lose yourself in shadows—

Those fatal shadows that belong to the earth.

'Twill light your home! Oh, venture not without it!

The One who made it knows the country well;

He knows the danger of those awful passes,

When storms the streamlets into torrents swell.

"He knows the bridge across that burn you'll come to,

Far down yon valley, inksome, lone, and drear;

He knows how heart would fail and feet would falter.

Without this light so tried—so true and clear.

I know the lamp,—my father's lamp before me,

It guided him until he reached his rest;

I've tried new lamps, but all, ay, all have failed me:

Believe me, sir, *this old one is the best.*"

CHARLOTTE MURRAY.

**Character.**

BY KATE YOST.

All well-meaning and thinking people will allow the assertion that it is right and proper to try to be well thought of. Some one has said that a young man is not far from ruin, when he can say without blushing, "I don't care what people think of me."

It is evident that where there is a case like this, there will be slackness, slothfulness, recklessness and impropriety in conduct. From the nature of the case, it involves a disregard for self-respect, for individual rights, for equity, and the laws of our land will be violated. As a rule it is admitted, if we do not show any respect for ourselves, we will not show any respect for others; neither will others show any respect for us. We believe this rule of measurement will hold out, for Christ says, "with whatsoever measure you mete, shall be measured to you again."

One of the definitions that Webster gives for "Character," is "good qualities, or the reputation of professing them," as "a man of character." The active mind is apt to inquire what good qualities must a person possess in order to be denominated a man of character, or what constitutes a good character? Such questions will draw out numerous answers.

In the first place, we say it is anything and everything that will beget in us a taste, a love to seek after the things that compose "the good, the true, and the beautiful." Whatever may be grand, holy, and elevating. Whatever may have a tendency to bring our stubborn will into subjection to such a degree as to subdue the stubborn passions of heart and mind. Thereby regulate our natural inclinations, so that we may be able at all times to evade the tempter's snare, and the alluring vanities that cross life's pathway, as we would a venomous serpent, whatever may, in a temporal or in a spiritual sense, benefit and bless mankind. It may be a success in the practical affairs of daily life; it may be the performance of church duties; it may be the careful performance of social duties; it may be the care and culture we give our hearts and heads.

The word of inspiration says, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of

good report. If there be any virtue or praise, think on these things.

But we must not forget that we greatly mistake if we seek our own glory, by putting too much stress on any particular performance of duty or good quality that may be great in our estimation. "Whatsoever ye do, do it all for the glory of God."

Mr. Herbert Spencer, of England, a foreigner and commonly counted an outsider in the sphere of Christianity and of religion thought, who is generally deemed a materialistic evolutionist, has given his opinion of American institution and American possibilities. Mr. Spencer said it was his belief that "education and the diffusion of political knowledge are not in themselves sufficient to fit men for free institutions. 'It is essentially a question of character,' he said, 'and only in a secondary degree a question of knowledge.'" speaking of the grosser party evils of American politics. He added, "not lack of information, but lack of certain moral sentiments, is the root of the evil." And here is where Mr. Spencer is at one with the soundest orthodoxy in his convictions and teachings. Not education but character is man's great need and man's great safeguard. Not knowledge but moral sentiments must be at the root of man's conduct.

From this preliminary view we come to look at character from a Sunday school stand point. Taking in proper training and association as foundation stones in building character.

It has been conceded that it is not in accordance with the laws of health to keep children in too closely. They must have recreation. Unconscious of self they are cheerful, happy, social, able, apt to learn, and imitative, lovers of variety. They need a change frequently. Hence we hold that parents, guardians and all who have children intrusted in their care, should not withdraw them from the Sunday school, church service, and society, by throwing the veil of seclusion around the home circle. Early in life they need to be instructed, disciplined and equipped, for the Christian warfare. Who knows what lasting impressions can be made while young, and how lastingly the result will be. Undoubted each little boy and girl will each Sabbath learn and carry home some principle, some truth, that will follow them all through the years as blest monitors and guides. They will be the sure foundation on which to build character. They will be a lamp to their feet all along the journey of life.

That there are influences at work all about us none will venture to deny. And they are exerted either to make us better or worse. Our education and training will either be onward and upward or downward. We are glad that it is possible for all to improve. It matters not how good or how bad we may be, there is always room for improvement. Here then, there is something we all can do. We all can strive, hope, work and pray, for the better. Need we say that the Sunday school work is a good work? and worthy of all the support that can be given it? But there is always some one to ask, "what good will come out of it at last when all is said and done?" There are some things whose value can not be measured in dollars and cents. That would be too mean a standard. Sunday schools assist measurably in the formation of character. Moral training is worth more than the gold of Ophir. Solomon said, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." O how beautiful to be entitled to a good name. The man or the woman, who justly merits the title is in possession of an aroma that casts a favorable fragrance all about, because it gives them the assurance of happiness, something which wealth can never give.

There is nothing worthier in life, than to seek to improve ourselves; to do good to others, and do what we can to make the world wiser and better. Act, and deeds of kindness will always bring their reward. When Mary procured the box of precious ointment, broke it, and poured the contents on Christ's head, she gave the world the sublimest example of love and fidelity. Perhaps she never expected a reward for it. But Christ said, "Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this wom-

an hath done, be told for a memorial of her." The lives, and the acts, of the wicked are swallowed up in the forgetfulness of the grave. Their memory perishes from the earth, but little acts and deeds of kindness like that of this good woman, carry their memory and influence down the ages to teach and bless mankind.

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**Why Not Now?**

It was a time of general religious interest with us. Many were seriously impressed, and some were giving themselves to Christ. One evening at an after-meeting in the church, when perhaps thirty or forty had remained for special conversation and prayer, I found two sisters sitting together in a pew, both of whom were evidently powerfully affected. I had known them well. They were daughters in one of our most excellent families, amiable and correct in their lives, and esteemed by all who were acquainted with them.

They told me frankly that they were sinners, that they were guilty as those who had offended God, and they needed Christ; that they saw how they must be saved by repentance and faith in him. But there they halted. I counselled them to lay hold of Christ as their Saviour then, to make a full surrender to him on the spot. It seemed like a new thought. "Can I now and here, right here?" said the younger of them. I replied, "Now is the time; this is the place." They had apparently supposed they must wait for some change to be wrought on them, some kind of miraculous transformation, with which they had nothing to do beyond a subjective reception or enduring of it, when they should find themselves in the kingdom.

We went over the conditions of salvation, which I stated plainly, and the call of Christ upon all to come to him and find rest. I said, "Now is his time, and it must be yours."

Then we all knelt in prayer, and their case was stated to Him who was himself leading them in the right way. When we arose one of the sisters was evidently at peace. A calm joy was expressed on her face. But with the other it was not so. She saw how it was with her sister. "I want Christ for my Saviour too," she said plaintively. "Why not come to him now?" said her comforted sister. "Can I come now?" she asked. "Now is the time," was the confident reply. "Then I will," she said. The old truth found a new meaning once more; the barrier fell down. We knelt again; and when we arose the second time both sisters were united in a new bond.

Many years with their changes have passed since that time. Those young faces now bear the marks of life's experiences; those heads have whitened with the frosts of time. I have been with those sisters in the joys and sorrows of their Christian homes; but through all trials they have maintained their Christian faith. Many who are dear to them have gone on before to the Father's house, and they are ready to follow.

Are there not many among us desiring to be saved, wondering why salvation does not come to them, wrought on by the divine Spirit, and needing the touch of a human hand, to whom should be affectionately put the kind and searching question, Why not now?—*Am Bot.*

Strive everywhere and in all things to be at peace. If trouble comes from within or without, treat it peacefully. If joy comes, receive it peacefully, without excitement. If we must needs flee from evil, let us do it calmly, without agitation, or we may stumble and fall in our haste. Let us do good peacefully, or our hurry will lead us into endless faults. Even repentance is work which should be carried on peacefully.—*ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.*

A WISE BOY.—When Luther was visiting one day he saw a boy who was very sick, and he knew he would soon die, so he asked him, "What will you take with you to God?" The reply was, "Everything that is good." How can you a poor sinner, take anything to God?" asked the great Reformer. Said the dying youth, "I will take to God in heaven a humble, contrite heart." "Go then, dear son, you will be a welcome guest with God," responded Luther, and he was right. For if we have the broken heart God will receive us here and give us a hearty welcome at last to his great home in heaven.